FOR MYSORE STATE

27—40,006—27-10-48

(1948) Department

SERIES.

G.O. No. 2488

Dated 14-5-1948

[Despatch Abstract.]

Salt - Sale of, by weight - Government of India letter Replied to .

No.Dy.435-Salt/I&S/48
Government of India,
Ministry of Industry and Supply

New Delhi, the 7th February, 1948.

To

The Secretary to the
Government of Madras , Agriculture Department
Madras.

Subject:- Salt - Sale of by Weight.

Sir,

I am directed to enclose herewith a copy each of this Ministry's letter No.227-Salt/328, dated the 22nd November, 1947, to the Collector of Central Excise, Madras and his reply no D.Dis.10166-Salt/47, dated the 16th December, 1947, on the above subject.

2. As will be observed from this correspondence, the Government of India consider that sale of salt by weight would be in the consumers' interest and desire that the existing practice in the Madras Province of selling salt by measure be discontinued. It is, however observed that the Bill referred to by the collector of Central Excise, Madras, (The Madras Weights and Measures Bill, 1947) does not appear to provide what articles whould be sold by weight and what by measure. It is therefore doubtful whether sale of salt by measure would become a punishable offence under the said Bill

3. The Government of India would be grateful to be furnished with the Provincial Government's views in the matter and, if they concur in the underlying idea of discouraging sale of salt by measure, to know whether they would agree to amend the said Bill suitably.

Yours faithfully,
sd. . . . . .
(A. BAKSI)

Deputy Secretary to the Government of India.

/True Copy/

Copy of letter No.C.227-Salt/47/328, dated the 22nd November, 1947, from the Ministry of Industry and Supply Government of India, to the Collector of Central Exeise, Madras.

I have the honour to refer to your letter D.A.Dis.No. 7448-Salt/47, dated the 23rd October, 1947.

2. It appears that by the sale of salt by measure the consumer is systematically being cheated. ~~It~~ shall be grateful if you will kindly enquire and let me know the position as to the authority competent to take legislative action to prevent cheating of consumers through sale by measure. If necessary, the Madras Government may be consulted and a report submitted urgently.

II

Copy of letter No.D.Dis.10166-Salt/47, dated the 16th December, 1947, from the Collector of Central Excise, Madras, to the Salt Controller to the Government of India, Ministry of Industry and Supply, New Delhi (with an extract from "The Hindu".

Subject:- Salt - Sale of, by measure - legislative action to prevent cheating.

Please refer to your letter C.No.227-Salt/47/328, dated 21st November, 1947.

2. It is a general practice in this Province, to sell certain commedities by measure instead of by weight and salt is one of them. There are at present no uniform scales of weights and measures and, therefore, the question of cheating does not arise unless it is proved that the measure in which salt is sold is ~~samller~~ than it should be or that in some way it has been made to contain less quantity than it actually should. Where salt is sold by measure, the manufacturers produce salt of larger crystals and in this way more measures are obtained from the weight of 2 maund bags. In this connection, I have to state that the Madras Government are introducing a Bill in the Madras Legislative Assembly to regulate the use of weights and measures in this Province. This may be a good opportunity for them to enforce retail sale of salt on a gravimetric basis instead of on a volumetric basis, as at present. I, therefore, suggest that the Madras Government be moved in the matter. I enclose an extract from "The Hindu" dated 11-12-1947 for your information.

Extract from "The Hindu" regarding weights and measures.

...

To regulate the use of weights and measures in the Province Mr. K. Madhava Menon, Minister for Agriculture, will introduce a Bill in the Madras Legislature.

The following is the statement of objects and reasons:-

There is no uniformity in the weights and measures now in use in the various parts of this Province. The question of undertaking legislation to secure such uniformity was considered on more than one occasion in the past, but was not proceeded with for one reason or another. Legislation on the subject is thus overdue, and its advantages are great and obvious. The object of this Bill is to secure the uniformity which is now lacking. The Bill was considered recently at a conference with representatives of commercial interests and the alterations suggested by those representatives have been embodied in it. The bill is thus one which has been agreed to by commercial interests in this Province.

The recognised weights and he recognised measures of length are and capacity or volume, and specified in the Schedule to the Bill, which is in three parts. The recognised weights have been re-related to the Standard Weights specified in the Standards of Weight Act, 1939 (Contral ActIX of 1939) weights and measures specified in the Schedule with reference to particular trades are not to be used in other trades. Power is also reserved to the Government or any authority or officer ~~mm~~ empowered bythem to notify any integral multiple ~~of~~- or sub-multiple of any recognised weight or measure for the purpose of this Bill. The Bill provides for the preparation and custody of primary and working standards for recognised weights and measures and also for the stamping of weights and measures. Inspectors will be appointed for the purpose of ensuring that the ~~wi~~ weights and measures used are accurate and have been properly stamped. Every dealing or contact after Bill becomes law is to be deemed to be had or made with reference to a recognised weight or measure.

The ~~sue~~ use or possession of unstamped or incorrect weights has been made a criminal offence and such weights and measures are also liable to be seized and forefeited to Government. Unautherised or incorrect stamping of weights and measures and the counterfeiting of any mark prescribed for stamping on recognised weights and measures have also been made offences. But no prosecution will be instituted in respect of the possession or use of an unrecognised weight of measure for a period of six months after the Bill becomes law.

GOVERNMENT OF MADRAS,
DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT,
FORT St. GEORGE, MADRAS.

LETTER (Ms) No.2488 dated 14-5-1948.

To

The Deputy Secretary to the Government of India,
Ministry of Industry & Supply,
New Delhi.

Sir,

Sub:- Salt - Sale of by weight.
Ref:- Your letter No.455-Salt/I and S/48 dated 7-2-48.

I am directed to state that the Madras Government have carefully considered the question of discontinuing the existing ~~par~~ practice of selling salt by measure, and they do not, ~~porpose~~ to undertake legislation to compel sale of salt by weight, for the following reasons:-

The Collector of Central Excise has overlooked the fact that the texture of salt varies not only with the place of manufacture but also with the humidity in the atmosphere. It is well known that the weight of a given volume of salt varies from month to month. Salt will be heaviest during the rainy season and lightest in the summer. Corresponding to this variation in the texture the price also varies from month to month in most bazaars. The problem of sale by Weight versus volume affects not only salt but other commodities also, principally rice. Rice is sold in wholesale only in terms of weight - a bag of 2 or 2½ imperial ■ maunds. The retail price of rice is only on a volumetric basis in terms of seers or measures. The number of measures which a given weight of rice contains depends on the quality of rice. Coarse rice is generally heavier than fine rice. Thus it will be seen that the question of legislation for compelling retail sale by weight instead of by volume is a general one. The custom of retail sale by volume seems to have its origin in the fact that, in rural areas, measures are easier to come by than scales and weights, and capable of easier check by comparison with other measur to verify their correctness. The over age villager can readily test for himself (e-g. by comparison) whether the measure in by a retail merchant is false or true. On the other hand to test a weight is a complicated process which the average villager cannot be expected to know. It is possible for a retail merchant to defraud his customers by using true weights in ~~conjection~~ junction with a false balance. The sale of salt by weight may lead to greater fraud, as judicious spraying with water would add to the weight of salt to the advantage of the retailer. It would be an unnecessary interference with a custom which has apparently worked satisfactorily from times immemorial.

sd. . . . . .
14-5-48

Copy to the Board of Revenue (with reference to Res.Mis.524 dated 19-4-48)
Copy to the Collector of Central Excise with reference to his letter No.C.1551-Salt/48 dated 23-2-48

/True Copy/

Superintendent,
MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

GK.75.7.

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